

VZCZCXYZ0006  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #6290 2392142  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 272142Z AUG 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8391  
INFO RUEHHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE 1302  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 7707  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 9255  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG 8884  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 5345  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 9890  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0572  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1065  
RUEHQQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 5936  
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBO/USMILGP BOGOTA CO IMMEDIATE  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1492

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 006290

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2017

TAGS: MARR PGOV PREL PTER CO

SUBJECT: GOC AND FARC MANEUVER ON HUMANITARIAN EXCHANGE  
DISCUSSIONS

REF: BOGOTA 6186

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.  
Reason: 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) Summary: FARC spokesperson Raul Reyes insisted the GOC create a demilitarized zone ("despeje") for a humanitarian exchange of FARC-held hostages. GOC officials firmly rejected a despeje, but said the GOC would consider new proposals to achieve a humanitarian exchange. End summary.

¶2. (U) In an August 26 interview in an Argentine daily, FARC spokesperson Raul Reyes welcomed Venezuelan President Chavez' August 19 offer of Venezuela as a possible site for talks on a humanitarian exchange, but said any exchange "must be resolved within Colombia (reftel). This would require the GOC to accept the FARC demand that the GOC demilitarize Florida and Pradera municipalities in Valle de Cauca department. Still, Reyes said negotiations on an exchange could be held "anywhere." Colombian Communist Party leader Carlos Lozano interpreted Reyes' latter comment as the FARC "opening the door" to Chavez to help find a new formula for negotiations.

¶3. (U) Minister of Interior and Justice Carlos Holguin said Reyes' response highlighted the FARC's intransigence. He said the GOC would be willing to consider new ways to achieve a humanitarian exchange, but would never accept a despeje. Meanwhile, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Andres Arias is leading what El Tiempo, Bogota's largest daily newspaper, called an "anti-despeje crusade." Arias traveled to Florida and Pradera on August 24 to bolster local opposition to a despeje. He joined local officials in condemning the idea and distributed tee shirts reading "No to Despeje." Arias was accompanied by senior Uribe advisor and speechwriter Jose Obdulio Gaviria.

¶4. (C) Outgoing Department of Administrative Security (DAS) director Andres Penate told us August 24 he expects Chavez' intervention to fail. Uribe remains opposed to a despeje and will also insist that any released FARC fighters not return to combat. Penate thinks the FARC will not accept these conditions. He explained that Uribe authorized Senator Cordoba to be an intermediary with the FARC on an accord

because he felt increasingly "on the ropes" over this issue. Uribe thought authorizing Cordoba would help neutralize international and domestic pressure, but was surprised when Cordoba asked Chavez to become involved.

Nichols